

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment After Final in reply to the Final Office Action mailed April 6, 2004. As an initial matter, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of the allowability of the subject matter of claims 11-13, 15, 16, 22, and 23.

In this Amendment After Final, Applicants have cancelled claims 14, 20-21, and 24-25, without prejudice or disclaimer, and amended claims 11, 22, and 23 to more clearly define the claimed invention. Claim 11 is an independent claim.

Before entry of this Amendment After Final, claims 11-25 were pending in this application, with claims 17-19 having been withdrawn from consideration. After entry of this Amendment After Final, claims 11-13, 15-19, and 22-23 are pending in this application, with claims 17-19 still having been withdrawn from consideration.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the subject matter of amended claims 11, 22, and 23. No new matter was introduced.

On page 2 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 11 for an informality. Applicants have amended claim 11 as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

On pages 2-3 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 22 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants have amended claims 22 and 23 to obviate the Section 112, first paragraph rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 112, first paragraph rejection.

On pages 3-8 of the Final Office Action, claims 14, 20, 24, and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,150,257 to Yin et al. ("Yin") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,150,270 to Matsuda et al. ("Matsuda"), U.S. Patent No. 5,795,828 to Endo et al. ("Endo"), and U.S. Patent No. 6,153,521 to Cheung et al. ("Cheung"); and claim 24 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yin in view of Matsuda, Endo, and Cheung, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,323,131 B1 to Obeng et al. ("Obeng");. Applicants have cancelled claims 14, 20, 24, and 25, without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering the rejection moot. Applicants note that claim 21 was not rejected over the prior art.

Applicants further submit that claims 12-13, 15-16, and 22-23 depend from independent claim 11, and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that independent claim 1 is allowable. In addition, at least some of the dependent claims recite unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the cited references, and therefore at least some also are separately patentable.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 11-13, 15-16. and 22-23 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claims 11, 22, and 23 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment After Final should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the Final Office Action by the Examiner presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against

Applicants' invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the Amendment After Final would allow the Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants submit that the entry of the Amendment After Final would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment After Final, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Final Office Action.

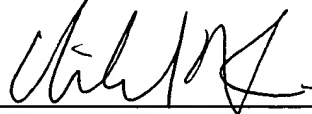
In discussing the specification and claims in this Amendment After Final, it is to be understood that Applicants are in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to any exemplary embodiments described in the specification or abstract and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicants are entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this Amendment After Final
and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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